## O.P. Rawat to head poll panel

Om Prakash Rawat

The Union Law Ministry on Sunday appointed seniormost Election Commissioner Om Prakash Rawat as the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) as the incumbent A.K. Joti will retire on Monday.

Former Finance Secretary Ashok Lavasa was appointed as Election Commissioner to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Rawat's elevation.

**Crucial polls to follow**

Mr. Rawat, who will take charge on Tuesday, will have a tenure of almost a year till his retirement in December 2018. He will oversee elections in Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland scheduled next month.

Crucial States like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh will also go to the polls under his watch.

**Sunil Arora next in line**

Sunil Arora, presently the second seniormost Election Commissioner, will continue until April 2021.

As per convention, Mr. Arora will be the CEC during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Mr. Lavasa, due to demit office in October 2022, will be the Chief Election Commissioner after Mr. Arora.

Election Commissioners have a fixed term of six years but have to step down if they reach 65 years of age before their term expires.

A Madhya Pradesh cadre IAS officer, Mr. Rawat has served as secretary, Department of Public Enterprises in the Ministry of Heavy Industries.

**Forest rights awardee**

Mr. Rawat had also served as principal secretary to Babu Lal Gaur, the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, between 2004 and 2006.

Mr. Rawat has a post graduate degree in Social Development Planning from the United Kingdom, completed in 1989, and has been a recipient of the Madhya Pradesh Award for recognition of forest rights in 2009.

Mr. Lavasa, before retiring as the finance secretary, served in the Ministries of Environment and Forests, Civil Aviation, Power, Home and Finance at the Centre and in the department of industries, tourism and public relations in his home cadre of Haryana.

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